
When to Call Emergency Services

My emergency number: _____ Poison center: _____

Heart and stroke (Chapters 6 and 7)

- Chest pain or tightness lasting more than a few minutes, or spreading to the arm, jaw or back; “heartburn” that spreads like this or comes with breathlessness.
- Sudden shortness of breath; a cold sweat with unexplained nausea; fainting.
- A drooping face, one arm weak or drifting down, slurred or confused speech: note the time it started.

Alcohol (Chapters 5 and 10)

- Confused and can’t be woken; vomiting while asleep or barely conscious; seizures.
- Slow or irregular breathing; pale or bluish skin; feeling cold.
- Confusion, hallucinations, high fever or a very fast heartbeat while stopping alcohol.

Head, stomach and carbon monoxide (Chapters 3, 5 and 7)

- A sudden, severe headache, “the worst of my life,” or one with a stiff neck, fever or confusion; vomiting blood.
- The CO alarm sounds, or several people get headaches and dizziness together: get outside, then call.

While you wait: don’t drive yourself to hospital with chest pain or signs of stroke; don’t leave a very drunk person alone, lay them on their side; no coffee, cold showers or forced vomiting.

See a doctor the same day: an irregular heartbeat that lasts after sobering up; a hot, red, swollen joint, especially the first time or with fever; vomiting that won’t let you keep fluids down.